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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Officers

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24 April 1979

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA : Robert R. Bowie
Deputy Director for National Foreign Assessment

Richard Lehman
National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM : [REDACTED]
Assistant National Intelligence Officer for USSR-EE

SUBJECT : Monthly Warning Assessment: USSR-EE

Summary

Meeting on 17 April, community Soviet-specialists saw the USSR gradually increasing its efforts to shore up the Afghan regime in the face of continuing multiple insurgencies, shaky Army morale, and growing friction with Pakistan. Community opinions differed as to whether the Soviets would ultimately go so far as to intervene with ground combat forces to rescue the regime if worse came to worst and more limited help failed to suffice. In Iran, the polarization of armed groups and social forces for and against Khomeini has now also publicly divided the Islamic movement, and analysts saw an eventual problem looming on the horizon for the Tudeh party and the Soviets in judging with whom to align themselves.

1. Afghanistan. In the month since the bloody popular uprising and army mutiny in Herat the multiple Afghan insurgencies have continued, the loyalty and morale of the army remains shaky, and the USSR has gradually increased its involvement in efforts to shore up the regime.

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The dispatch of more military advisers and hardware has been followed by a visit by Deputy Defense Minister Yepishev, probably to discuss ways of halting the decay of Afghan army morale and discipline. Because of the support furnished the rebels from across the Pakistani border, Afghan-Pakistan relations remain very poor, there have been some overflights and shelling at that border, and the USSR has leveled public and private accusations at Islamabad. Despite US protests, the Soviets have also continued to accuse the US and China of instigating the rebellion, and many analysts feel that this posture is intended in part as advance justification for Soviet ground combat involvement should this ultimately prove necessary. There was no community consensus as to whether the Soviets would in fact go that far if worse came to worst, although there was general agreement that the USSR would in any case render all possible help to the regime short of combat troops in the hope that this would suffice. Pakistan meanwhile remains concerned at the implicit threat of Soviet reprisal, including the possibility of Soviet or Afghan incitement of Pakistan's Baluchi tribes. []

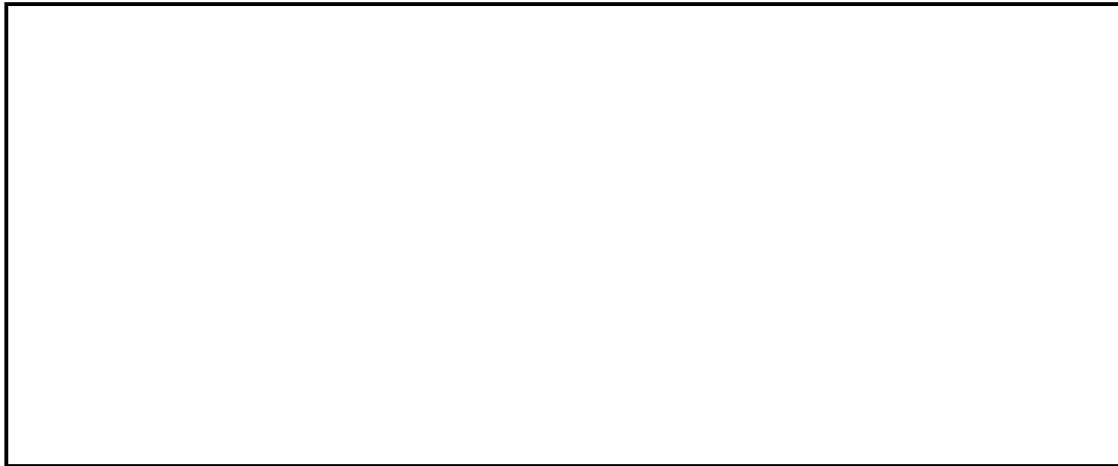
2. Iran. Analysts this month focused on the possible eventual implications for Soviet policy of the surfacing of sharp differences of view within the Iranian Islamic leadership and the momentary polarization of contending social forces and armed groups around Khomeini and rival Ayatollah Taleghani. Although Taleghani has retreated from his open challenge to Khomeini, the underlying differences remain and could surface again. Over the long term, the Soviet-supported Tudeh (Communist) party -- whose leader has just returned from Eastern Europe -- will be faced with a difficult choice as to how far and how openly to align itself with the other leftist forces that had sought to use Taleghani as a vehicle to unite opposition to Khomeini. The consensus view was that whatever advice the USSR gave Tudeh, the Soviets themselves would avoid committing themselves publicly as long as possible while seeking to maintain contacts in both camps, and meanwhile encouraging the tendency of each side to blame the United States as the sinister force behind its opponents. []


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4. Sino-Soviet. Analysts were particularly concerned with the aftermath of Chinese abrogation of the Sino-Soviet treaty. The Soviets have maintained a highly skeptical yet ostensibly receptive posture toward the vague Chinese suggestion that negotiations to improve the state-to-state relationship might now be held. In view of the important policy implications which even a modest reduction in Sino-Soviet tensions might hold, the community should be alert for any evidence that the Chinese have put flesh on the negotiations idea and any evidence of the Soviet reaction to a more concrete proposal. 

5. Soviet-Cuban-Caribbean. A gradual accumulation of evidence this year has now reached a point which suggests a need for closer attention by community Soviet specialists to two sometimes-neglected aspects of Soviet-Cuban relations. One is the Soviet military presence in Cuba and the Soviet-Cuban military relationship on the island, including trends in hardware deliveries and basing. The other is the evidence of expanded Soviet-Cuban cooperative efforts through intelligence, military, and diplomatic channels to advance Soviet and Cuban influence in diverse parts of the Caribbean at US expense. In recent weeks, such evidence has turned up in Soviet-Cuban dealings with Jamaica and Grenada as well as with the Sandonista rebel movement in Nicaragua. 